

Jobs Listening Session
Montana Legislature
January 8th 2011

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The information I provide to you today is derived from my own practical experience. A proven approach to a successful logging business in Montana was to take supply and demand, apply a heavy dose of common sense and nurture that with hard work. Unfortunately, governments at all levels have hijacked that formula and we have allowed them to do so. Our blindness has left behind the ruins of a once thriving natural resource industry. The common sense factor is endangered, as is the American logger. The first step to recovery is here with the restoration of common sense.

I began my career in the post and pole industry with a Chevy Luv pickup, a six pack of beer and a borrowed chainsaw. I was fortunate to get in on an active logging operation and combined my post and pole experience with logging. From there, I went out on my own and expanded to include full time employees and subcontracted a substantial amount of work.

By the late 90's, the economic feasibility of my business was at the breaking point. The remaining infrastructure of the wood products industry became monopolized leaving small business out in the cold. This, compiled with the eco-extremists attack on public land resource access drove many small operations like mine literally to extinction. I have survived, bearing the burden of taxes, insurance and permitting, hoping the industry would turn around and once again operate with a supply driven approach. It is now 2011, and the outlook is bleak. Due to government intervention in free enterprise, fueled by eco-extremism, I along with other family owned small businesses cannot wait any longer.

Out of desperation, Sherman Anderson stood before this legislature with his hand out to subsidize his business through federal stimulus. Since then, Senator Tester has entered into a sweetheart deal known as the "Tester Wilderness Bill." That bill perpetuates the unsustainable subsidizing of the industry through promises that cannot be legally made or kept. These processes have been coined as the collaboration programs of the century and have only fueled extreme environmentalism. They do not and cannot work and bring to the American people a great loss. It is important to recognize that when one comes to the table to offer up part of one's livelihood, those on the other side of that table must have something to offer of equal value. This has not happened and in fact, there has been such a disparity in equity, all natural resource industries have lost before the takings begin.

So, here is what I offer to this legislature to help turn the natural resource industry around.

1. Pass SB 117! Coordination will provide the opportunity for local input and a true seat at the table for the people of Montana.
2. Pass SJ6 with a citizen backed petition demanding accountability. This is essential to insure that the federal government recognizes the rights of the people. HR 450 (federal)
3. Propose and pass legislation that provides for natural resource development under states sovereignty and coordination. LC 1047 as a possible starting point.
4. Propose and pass legislation that will require bonding equal to 2 ½ times the value of a timber sale within the boundaries of Montana for appeal or litigation purposes.
5. Stop subsidizing green energy programs at the expense of our natural resources and the future infrastructure needs. Peek-a-boo forest management does not work.
6. Oppose all bills like LC 1856-57, and LC 0849; support bills like LC 1905. (Global Warm)
7. Direct DNRC to prescribe forest management projects with smaller businesses in mind. 26,000 tons (1000 loads) of beetle kill timber removed under a restrictive season. 185K